REMARKS

In response to the final Office Action dated August 26, 2004, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration.

All the pending claims, namely claims 1-3, 5-8, 10-14, 16-18, and 20 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,436,896 (Anderson) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,735,168 (Schnell), and alternatively over U.S. Patent No. 6,662,211 (Weller) in view of Schnell. Applicants respectfully believe that the pending claims are patentable over Anderson in view of Schnell and over Weller in view of Schnell.
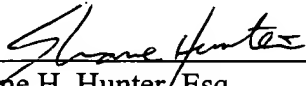
Applicants respectfully believe that the Examiner agreed during a telephone conference on May 21, 2004 that the claims are patentable over Anderson alone, and thus the Examiner has combined Anderson with Schnell, and Weller with Schnell, asserting that Schnell teaches sending the recited signals in an unmixed format. Schnell, however, fails to combine with Anderson or Weller to render the claims unpatentable. Schnell discusses, at Column 4, Line 65 - Column 5, Line 2, receiving voice and signaling data, and separating the voice and signaling data. The signaling data referred to is for call setup, class service, and network management (Column 3, lines 57-60), and is not voice. Indeed, Schnell clearly distinguishes between voice and the signaling data in the very labels used (i.e., "voice" versus "signaling data"). Such signaling data cannot be mixed with voice/speech signals, and thus the discussion of separating such signaling data from voice data in Schnell is inapplicable to conferencing in Anderson or Weller.

Schnell fails to combine with Anderson or Weller to teach, disclose, or suggest at least the provisions for transmission of speech signals recited in independent claims 1, 5, or 12. Claim 1 recites that a signal processing arrangement is configured to transmit speech signals toward terminals in an unmixed format. Claim 5 recites a signal processing arrangement configured to determine L encoded signals, of N encoded speech signals, and to alter packet headers of the signals to transmit the packets toward appropriate terminals. Claim 12 recites that an output device is configured to transmit second speech signals in an unmixed format toward terminals. Schnell's discussion of separating signaling data from voice is inapplicable to the conferencing in Anderson or Weller and thus cannot combine with Anderson or Weller to teach, disclose, or suggest the unmixed format of speech signals recited in independent claims 1 or 12, or the

alteration of packet headers of speech signals recited in independent claim 5. Thus, claims 1, 5, and 12, and claims 2-3, and 13-14 that depend from claims 1 and 12, respectively, are patentable over Anderson or Weller in view of Schnell.

Schnell also fails to combine with Anderson or Weller to teach, disclose, or suggest at least the provisions for transmission of telecommunication signals recited in independent claims 6, 10, 16, or 20. Claim 6 recites transmitting signals, that are similar to loudest selected telecommunications signals, toward terminals in an unmixed format. Claim 10 recites transmitting second signals, that are similar to loudest selected telecommunications signals from first telecommunications signals, toward terminals, and altering headers of packets of at least some of the first signals to produce the second signals. Claim 16 recites a computer program product configured to cause a computer to transmit signals, that are similar to loudest selected telecommunications signals, toward terminals in an unmixed format. Claim 20 recites a computer program product configured to cause a computer to transmit second signals, that are similar to loudest selected telecommunications signals from first telecommunications signals, toward terminals, and altering headers of packets of at least some of the first signals to produce the second signals. The signaling data discussed by Schnell relates to call setup, class service, and network management, and would not have "loudest" signals, as recited in each of claims 6, 10, 16, and 20. Thus, the signals discussed in Schnell are for call control and are inapplicable for combining with Anderson or Weller to achieve the features recited in claims 6, 10, 16, and 20. Thus, claims 6, 10, 16, and 20, and claims 7-8, 11, and 17-18 that depend from claims 6, 10, and 16, respectively, are patentable over Anderson or Weller in view of Schnell.

Based on the foregoing, this application is believed to be in allowable condition, and a notice to that effect is respectfully requested. The Examiner is invited to call the Applicant's Attorney at the number provided below with any questions.

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